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SUBJECT: Senegal Registers First Lab Confirms cases of H1N1

¶1. Senegal has seen its first official cases of H1N1 after some 14
were reported in the papers and then confirmed by Minister of
Health Modou Diagne Fada. Seven of the cases were reported in the
Dakar suburb of Pikine, six were reported in Diourbel and one in
Touba. Both Diourbel and Touba were recently host to over one
million pilgrims from the Mouride Brotherhood as part of their
celebration of the "Grand Magal" in Touba. According to the
Director of the National Pharmacist Association (PNA), Dr. Pape
Ndiaye, Senegal does not yet have the specific vaccine available
for the H1N1 but the PNA has 10,000 doses of Tamiflu.

¶2. During his press conference on February 8 Health Minister Fada
claimed that the H1N1 epidemic "is under control and that people
should not panic because medication is available and free of
charge." He tried to allay peoples' fears by saying that this
pandemic "was far from being a deadly one." He went on to say that
Senegal has enough resources to face the swine flu indicating that
kits and surgical masks have been distributed throughout Senegal's
various city and municipal health structures and that medical staff
were on standby in 11 regions. Minister Fada confirmed that none
of the people who had been infected had died. The Minister then
said that, "the World Health Organization has promised to offer us
more vaccines by April."

¶3. Comment: According to Embassy Dakar's medical personnel, H1N1
vaccine is not available either commercially or in the public
health sector in Senegal. The ambiguous statement from the
Minister aims to calm fears, but should not be construed to mean
that Senegal will be able to inoculate the population. At this
stage, Senegal cannot prevent people from getting H1N1, but the
country's medical infrastructure seems ready to be able to cope
with an outbreak, as long as it remains a minor one. End comment.

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